

CITY OF NEWARK, NJ'S AFRICAN-AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Edward Crawford - February 23, 1997

Q: Good afternoon. This is Glen Marie Brickus. Today is February 23, 1997, and I'm here with Mr. Edward Crawford. Mr. Crawford, thank you so much for coming.

Crawford: It's a pleasure to be here.

Q: And you're glad you will allow us to make you a part of the Scott-Krueger Mansion Cultural Center Project for the City of Newark. So I'm going to ask, to begin with, to ask you to give me your full name, your date of birth and your place of birth.

Crawford: My name is Edward Albert Crawford. My date of birth is January 13, 1950. I was born in Jamaica, Queens, New York.

Q: Okay. What is your occupation?

Crawford: I am a counselor for the Kentock Group, which is a series of halfway houses.

Q: Where did you work before that?

Crawford: Prior to that, I worked for another halfway house, an organization with the Center for Urban Education. Prior to that I worked for the State of New Jersey.

Q: In what capacity with the State?

Crawford: For the State of New Jersey I was the community release coordinator for Northern State Prison and I was also a parole counselor for the State of New Jersey Parole Board.

Q: Mr. Crawford, what is the extent of your education? How far did you go in school?

Crawford: I graduated high school and have had several attempts at getting through college.

Q: Whom did you marry, when and where?

Crawford: I was married in 1970 to a young lady by the name of Barbara Francis Taylor. We divorced in 73, and I'm now married to Barbara Jean Martin Crawford now. And we've been married now for twenty-one years.

Q: Where did you meet Barbara and when?

Crawford: In fact, both Barbaras were met at the Chad School. The second Barbara was met there when she came to visit a friend who was starting to work at the school. Subsequently, she got a job at the school. We both taught there for a year, and the rest is history.

Q: How long did you know Barbara before you and she were married?

Crawford: Approximately a year and a half.

Q: And what kind of work did she do or does she do now?

Crawford: She is now a teacher with the East Orange Board of Education.

Q: Do you have any children?

Crawford: We have three. Onaji, who has just about become sixteen. He'll be the sixteen the 22nd of March. Ushangway who just turned fourteen the fifth of February. And Anasu who will turn eleven the twenty-sixth of March.

Q: Where were your children born?

Crawford: All in Newark. I should say for the record, I also have a twenty-five year old from my first marriage, Erisa.

Q: I see. What was your father's name and where was he born?

Crawford: My father is Edward Austin Crawford. He was born in Manhattan, New York.

Q: Your mother's name and where was she born?

Crawford: My mother's name was Alberta Elizabeth Lupus Crawford. She was born in South Carolina, and lived in Newark from 1922 to her death in 1985.

Q: Do you have any brothers and sisters?

Crawford: Yes. I have a sister Anita Eileen Crawford, and an adopted brother Samuel Crawford, and an adopted sister Judy Crawford.

Q: Where were they born? Do you know.

Crawford: My sister was born in Jamaica, Queens. Both my adopted brother and sister were born here in Newark.

Q: What was your father's occupation and your mother's?

Crawford: My father was a postal employee for forty-two and a half years. My mother held various jobs from working at Emerson Electric up until she was a full-time teacher at Chad School, and in fact, at her passing, still working there.

Q: Have you at any point changed your name as a result of being a member of some national group or ethnicity or religion or politics or any reason at all, have you ever changed your name?

Crawford: Yes, in fact, during the early 70s in that period between marriages I was in the Mohammed Baraca's organization, otherwise known as the UHL, and I was named Mushangway during that period of time.

Q: When did you first come to Newark?

Crawford: 1952.

Q: Why did you come to Newark?

Crawford: At that time the school system over here was considered by my folks to be better than that of New York. So this is where we came.

Q: You were brought to New York then by your parents?

Crawford: Yes.

Q: Did you or your family know anyone in Newark before you came over here?

Crawford: My grandmother and my aunt, and my grandmother, two aunts, and two uncles all lived over here in Newark. In fact, we lived in a three-family house that was basically all family.

Q: So had someone told you, told you family about Newark before you came over here to live?

Crawford: In fact, my mother had spent most of her youth and early adult life here in Newark.

Q: And how old did you say you were when you came to Newark?

Crawford: Just two. Just having turned two.

Q: Oh, just two years old. Okay. What, when you became old enough to pay attention to what was happening in Newark and to notice the social and economic climate in the City of Newark, what was your perceptions of Newark at that time?

Crawford: Okay. I guess I started becoming aware of the Newark around me while in high school. So that would have been mid to late 60s. And we were still somewhat of a thriving town, still somewhat of a thriving town. Still had out factories to some extent, and we still had Western Electric and quite a few of the other factories of that nature. I myself had worked at Bamberger's. So, you know, it still had the impression of a town that still had something going for it.

Q: Where did you first live in Newark? Why? And how long did you stay in that particular place?

Crawford: We grew up on West Ryan Street, which was the Clinton Hill Section of Newark. My grandparents owned the three-family house. As I said before, it was basically at different points of time almost always family on all three floors and the basement from time to time. I was there until, in fact, for me I was there until 1969 and so for me I guess I was there for about seventeen years. My folks stayed in the house for another seven years until urban renewal actually got them out of the house.

Q: So all together your family lived in that house for how long?

Crawford: My aunt and grandparents and them moved in the house in 1940, yeah about 40, and they were in the house until 76.

Q: And your immediate family lived there for how long?

Crawford: We were in there for approximately twenty-four years.

Q: Now, you gave me some indication of what you thought Newark was like when you first became aware of the environment. And you said your first impression of Newark was what?

Crawford: Still thriving. There was still a sense of community to it. At the point that I started paying attention to Newark, white flight had not really taken hold yet. In fact, when I went to school at Arts High, a very mixed population at the school. So Newark had not yet seen that real dramatic changeover start to happen yet.

Q: What was the neighborhood like? Was it a commercial area, with shops or businesses or factories?

Crawford: Yes. In fact, across the street from me a Polish gentleman owned the local candy store, deli. Another, black folks down on the corner, down the other end of block from us, had a grocery store. A fairly mixed neighborhood. The A&Ps had not gone to the big stores yet. And just two blocks down the street was the local corner A&P.

Q: What was the ethnicity of the neighborhood?

Crawford: As I stated, we had a Polish gentleman owned the deli across the street. Two Irish ladies who had never married lived on the corner. They were the Finnegans. Right beside us. It was a mixed neighborhood.

Q: Okay. So the people who owned the businesses in the neighborhood actually lived there.

Crawford: Oh yeah.

Q: Where did you live in Newark next after you left that particular neighborhood?

Crawford: I then moved over to Thirteenth Avenue and South Twentieth Street where I still live today.

Q: Why did you settle in this place?

Crawford: At that time my folks bought a house. They bought a house in the early 70s. Yeah, I guess, 70, 71. And we're still in that house today.

Q: What was the housing like when you moved into it?

Crawford: Still in pretty decent shape. The neighborhood is in pretty decent shape. We have not had the situation of many neighborhoods of growing lots. We've seen people hold onto housing. And most of it's in pretty decent shape now.

Q: Is the neighborhood, was the neighborhood ethnically diverse then or is it today?

Crawford: It was, and for a second it seemed to have lost it, but we now seem to be getting back some diversity in our neighborhood, yeah.

Q: When you first came to Newark, as far as you can remember, where did your family shop?

Crawford: The local A&P. As a car became available to the family, there was some shopping done further out. I believe in South Orange from time to time. In fact, there was an A&P up on Clinton Avenue between South Tenth and South Eleventh that was used. Shopping was done locally and also out in the suburban area.

Q: Do you remember how African-American customers were treated by caucasian business

people, business owners?

Crawford: Within our local community, they were treated well because they were, we were neighbors. We knew Joe. Joe knew my parents. You know. He would no more think of disrespecting me than I thought of disrespecting him.

Q: Do you recall whether there was any resentment against stores in the neighborhood not owned by black folk?

Crawford: In those days, no.

Q: Were there any black folk who owned businesses in either one of those neighborhoods where you lived?

Crawford: Yes. As I said before, the store down at the other corner from the house was a grocery store. Came into existence as the A&P were consolidated into the larger stores that they became. But, yes, we had black tailor, black cleaners. We had, we had black entrepreneurs in our neighborhood.

Q: Did the local merchants offer the residents credit?

Crawford: Now, as a youngster I could not say for sure. I believe so. But that was not something that my folks particularly dealt with. So I don't know that it was, how widespread it was or wasn't.

Q: When you came to Newark, now these questions probably won't have too much meaning to you because you don't have any basis of comparison, but I'm going to ask you. When you came to Newark, were you able to purchase dry goods and foods that were familiar to you where you had come from? You did not come from the south, but your parents lived in the south, right?



Crawford: My mother had lived in the south. But had spent a substantial amount of time in Newark. I'd say from early teens, from early teens on. So I don't know how much of what, you know, they brought from the south they did not experience up here.

Q: So actually as far as you know, you have only known the kind of foods and the ways of dressing, the clothing that people wore, you had not basis of comparison to say that it would be different from down south, even from New York where you came when you came over here. It would have been just about the same, right?

Crawford: Really no. I'm a northerner.

Q: Were relatives and friends as helpful and supportive here in Newark as you had known them to be in New York?

Crawford: To the best of my knowledge from all that was ever talked about in the family, yes. Obviously we moved in with family over here in Newark so, yes, we had a good relationship both here and in New York.

Q: Were you a part of an extended family in Newark?

Crawford: Oh but definitely. Grandma lived on the third floor. An aunt, an uncle at different times, one of the other two uncles would be upstairs. On the first floor at different times another aunt, her daughter, and her children would be on the first floor. So extended family, most definitely.

Q: Did you know of anyone or did you yourself refer to other people, especially older people who were not really relatives, do you refer to them as aunt or uncle or cousin, whatever?

Crawford: Definitely. Those older than you were, you know, if they were of a relationship where

they were always around, in most cases they were uncle so and so or aunt so and so. And, in fact, it was later years when you discovered that they weren't actually related to you.

Q: What do you remember about such events as births, weddings, and funerals? How were they observed at your earliest awareness?

Crawford: Okay. Some of the earlier celebrations of those sorts were first weddings. Even as a child, those were very festive occasions. Folks from as far around, I mean, those were times when folks made it their point to try and get together with each other. The first funeral that I remember was in 59 when my grandmother passed away, and folks came from far and wide for that. And, you know, as a child of nine at the time, you know, were more seen than heard. But, you know, it was always interesting to see the grownups get together.

Q: Have you seen these customs change since you became an adult?

Crawford: More so as we go on we seem to get much busier where people made it a point to take the time to go to another, you know, a relative died in another city, those relatives in that city got together and if it two cars for everybody to go, they went. And whatever it took to get folks to it, they did. Now, we're more inclined to send a telegram. We're more inclined to, you know, not want to take the time out of our schedule to make those journeys that we seemed to almost automatically know we had to make.

Q: What about when new babies were born into the family?

Crawford: You know, always a joyous time. You know, the ladies seemed to really get, have a, get off on that whole thing of telling the newest mother, you know, what to expect, and to just talk about who the baby looked like and what person, who's only a name to you, but how's this baby's supposed to look like somebody that was uncle so and so and aunt so and so, or look just like grandma so and so. And, you know, you just have to take their word for it that I guess that who's

they look like.

Q: What about celebrations of holidays such as Christmas, Easter, Fourth of July and Thanksgiving? Is there any difference in the way they're celebrated now then they were when you first remember?

Crawford: Some difference now. Well we're, in our particular family, we're a smaller family than we were then. But we tend to get together with my sister-in-law and her family and children. But in the old days, Thanksgiving was celebrated at our house, which only meant everybody came either downstairs or upstairs. Christmas was celebrated at my grandma's house which meant we all went upstairs. And New Year's Eve was, well we all came into the same house basically. But even then, it was a tradition that the first person to walk into the house had to be a man. So, cause we had gone to church, you know, on New Year's Eve. So when we got back to the house, I generally would be the oldest male present so I had to walk into the house before grandma and all the rest of the folks in the family.

Q: What was that?

Crawford: I understood it to be a good luck tradition, or one of those things that a man should enter the house first to start the years whatever. And I can't really tell you a lot about it other than my mother would look at me and say, well you know, we have to have a man walk in the house first. And so I'd get pulled from wherever I was in line to the front to walk in first.

Q: And do you think that, that was a tradition, cause I can remember that having, we'd always wish that no woman would ever come to our house before a man did on New Year's Day. But do you think they understood or they had a reason for that kind of tradition?

Crawford: I'm sure, I'm sure tracked down its earliest there's a logical reason for that. Maybe it was just that you want to make sure that, and this could be a bit chauvinistic, but that you sent a

man in to make sure it was safe going in. I've always wondered. I've never really, you know, went deep into it with my folks to find out just why that was. But that's always been a tradition.

Q: How did the use of items like liquor, drugs, tobacco, cigars, cigarettes, and snuff, chewing tobacco, were those things prevalent either in your home or in the neighborhood where you lived?

Crawford: I had several uncles that smoked, one aunt that did, cousin. I subsequently myself smoke, my sister does. My folks did not smoke. Were not really big drinkers, not even really social drinkers, occasional drinkers. Now for Christmas, Thanksgiving, you know, that sort they would have alcohol and consume some. To this day I have never seen my father even get a buzz on with alcohol. He's just not a person who drinks. My mom was never a big drinker. There were members of the family who did drink and could get a little rambunctious when they did drink.

Q: What about the use of such, of home remedies or patent medicines? When somebody got sick in the family, what were they most inclined to use patent medicines or home remedies?

Crawford: A mixture of both. I can remember the mustard plasters and some home remedies. I can also remember that there was a family doctor, and in those days they actually made home visits.

Q: Were children delivered by midwives or did mothers go to the hospital to deliver their children?

Crawford: All of my brothers and sisters and cousins, to the best of my knowledge, we were all delivered in the hospital or a hospital. My children had midwives present for several of them along with doctors in a couple of cases. But, no, we were all hospital delivered.

Q: Did you know of anyone who believed in the practice of such things as conjure, voodoo, whodo and roots?

Crawford: Did not know anyone on any kind of a personal level. Heard it talked about as a child in the neighborhood, but did not know of anyone who did. More hearsay than anything.

Q: What about pets? Did you have pets as you grew up?

Crawford: Yes. Yes. There was always a dog present in most of my childhood days. Always a dog around.

Q: What about now? Do you have any pets now?

Crawford: Do not have a dog at this time. It's something that we talk about, but we have not yet had. Well, we have had a dog. Haven't had one in the last few years.

Q: What about the incidents of crime in Newark when you first remembered?

Crawford: Not until the latter 60s did that start even coming close to home. I can remember just about the time I guess I was either going away to college or might even have been away to college one of my aunts was mugged coming home for work. So that had to have been like 67, 68. So through the 50s, early 60s, not particularly a situation that we dealt with a lot. It just did not happen to a great extent.

Q: What about juveniles? Do you remember any juveniles having been involved in criminal activity?

Crawford: There, yes, I have cousins, one cousin who kept himself in trouble for quite a number of years. Had a fascination with other people's cars. And took quite a while for him to understand that you can't mess around with other people's cars.

Q: Go ahead. I'm sorry.

Crawford: Not. Most of the kids I grew up with, we came out of backgrounds where the neighborhood policed us. I mean any neighbor would look out her window and freeze all action anywhere in the neighborhood any time. So, you know, we were policed pretty well in our neighborhood.

Q: You said that the incidents of bothering with other people's cars. You have any idea what year, can you remember now what year that was approximately?

Crawford: Oh, he ran through that situation I guess from about 62, 63 up until about 68, about 68, when the juvenile services decided that maybe he needed a little vacation to understand he was supposed to stop doing that.

Q: What about now? How would you classify, how would you describe the incidents of juvenile crime now?

Crawford: The checks and balances seem to have become less. To the point that neighbors no longer feel empowered to police other people's children. Children have a much, there's a bigger lack of deference to age and lack of respect for the community around them. So where we were checked a lot more by just the sheer fact that Mrs. Brickus might be sitting on her porch, so therefore some things we weren't going to do cause obviously you'd see us do them, or she would see us do them. Now, they're more inclined to do things even with, you know, witnesses watching them. And there's less expectation on both their part, their parents' part, and unfortunately the neighborhood's part for folks to get involved and say, you know, why are you doing this or stop doing this. So our checks and balances as a neighborhood seem to have fallen to, fallen aside.

Q: Mr. Crawford, you said that you work for the criminal justice system in several different capacities. What has been your observation in terms of young people, say from what we refer to as juveniles to young adults being involved in the criminal justice system now?

Crawford: One of the things that I have found and my experience has basically been from the older juveniles up through the adult males. But that for the most part prison isn't scaring them. They don't, you know, it's more of a rite of passage than it is a situation where somebody really punishing them. They're not seeing it as a devastating point in their life. Whereas in my youth going to Jamesburg or going to the Youth House was devastating. I mean, Lord, you know, I can remember telling the police one time when he just stopped a group of us walking down the street that if he took me in, he'd have to keep me. Cause I couldn't call and tell my folks that I was at the police station. So if you take me, you gotta keep me cause I can't call them and tell them I'm at the police station. Kids are no longer afraid of either parents or the police or the consequences that come beyond that.

Q: What was your perception of black folk helping each other in Newark?

Crawford: In those days we were of the, the extended family was very real. I can remember that my dad worked midnight shifts so he wasn't always available for going to the park and all that. But the next door neighbor, Mr. Cruz, had a big stationwagon. He'd load us all up in his stationwagon, take us all out the park to play baseball. You know, we went roller skating. There was always some father involved, some uncle who would take us around. We, the extended family had a much bigger impact on our lives in those days.

Q: How would overall relations with whites in Newark compare? Well, what was the overall relation between blacks and white in Newark as far as you can remember?

Crawford: Did not have a sense, myself personally, or racism in my childhood. I was in and out of Polish houses. I was in and out of German houses. In and out of Jewish homes who may have been of Polish extraction or German extraction. At this time now, even thinking about the folks, I couldn't tell just what their ultimate background was. But I was in and out of all kind of homes in those days. You know, these were friends, these were kids I grew up with. And I personally could not say that I ever experienced racism in those days. I was treated as Phillip's friend, you know,

Dana's friend. So for me, I don't know that, as I said, Joe who owned the candy store on the corner never had any problems. I can't think of a time when there wasn't respect given and shown.

Q: Even though you grew up in a city, do you remember anybody in your family or were you ever taken fishing or hunting or to the country for any reason as you grew up?

Crawford: I was in the Boy Scouts out of Clinton Place Junior High, which was its name then, it's now University High. We had a Boy Scout troop there. It's number was 95. The gentleman's name was Thomas Ertzberger, he was the scoutmaster. And I'd say about once every four to six weeks we went on a camping trip. I love camping. I've taken my boys camping. In fact, my whole family has gone camping. It's something that I truly enjoy doing. It's about as close to getting back to the earth as I've been able to get. But it's something that I enjoy and will probably enjoy all my life.

END SIDE ONE; TAPE ONE; BEGIN SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE.

Q: You went on hunting and camping trips.

Crawford: We camped in all times of year. We went hunting on several occasions with the camp rangers back up at a camp called Mohegan out on the western border of New Jersey. I learned a lot of skills. I discovered a lot of self-reliance in camping because what you don't bring with them, you don't have when you get out there in the woods. So you learn to prepare yourself well, and then do what you have to do when you're out there. And a lot, and as I said, a lot of rope skills. A lot of skills, campfire, things that come in handy even today.

Q: And when you were, when you came to Newark, you told me about the neighborhoods where you lived, the housing, etc. How were, how did black folk really related to each other. We talked about the different ethnic groups or people who lived in the neighborhood, but what kind of



relationship was there among black folk who lived in Newark in general?

Crawford: Great. I think we had a good relationship. I think as I remember it, you know, there was, I don't remember a sense of any animosity. I think folks got along well. The scuffle for everyday life probably kept everybody very busy, but as kids, we, you know, we were in and out of each other's houses all throughout the neighborhood. And there just, I just did not detect anything other than good feelings, a sense of safeness in and out, wherever I was able to go.

Q: What was your first job in Newark?

Crawford: Well, besides delivering newspapers, first job was working for Bamberger's down on Market Street. I worked in fur storage for them. I moved around quite a bit throughout the store. I worked in several different sections. I also worked in the auto center at one time.

Q: How did you get the job at Bamberger's?

Crawford: Went down and filled out an application, but I really was doing. Well, I also had two aunts that were working there at the time I went. Although I doubt seriously that it had much to do with my getting the job. I just filled out an application and got hired.

Q: How long did you work at Bam's?

Crawford: I worked at Bam's the summer before I went away to school. Came back and went back to work with them when I dropped out of college. Worked for them for the next three years before working with the Chad School when we started that.

Q: How did you regard the jobs that you did at Bamberger's, and how well did they pay you?

Crawford: Oh, that's an interesting subject. Bamberger's in those days paid probably not much

better than minimum wage. I can remember an incident in which working in the fur storage department, I hustled, I mean I worked as hard as I could to try to do my job as well as possible. At times they used me as a courier and sent me to New York to the fur district to pick up a coat or deliver a coat if it had to be repaired or whatever. And they used to be amazed that I would not waste time. I mean, I went. I went straight to New York, came straight back. I did my job well enough so that the manager of the fur department found out that I could play pinochle. He would take me and we would go upstairs to the employee dining room, where the sales manager, who at that time I think they had just come off of working on commissions, so their incentive for working hard seemed to be taken away from them. So we would go up there, and it used to be funny that here'd be this one black kid sitting up there with all these white folks playing pinochle, and generally my general manager and I would be beating them soundly. So I remember having to sit with him and somewhat plead my case to get a nickel raise, a nickel an hour raise. However, when I transferred out of the section and went on to another section to work, and the next fur storage season started, they hired two guys to do the job I did by myself. And I at times would play cards with the manager, but I did the job. Made me wonder why I had to work so hard to get that nickel out of them when they had to pay two salaries for the salary they paid me.

Q: Were these white fellows that they hired to replace you, or were they black guys?

Crawford: White guys. Another irony of the situation.

Q: What were the working conditions like on all those jobs that you did for Bam's, what were the general conditions like?

Crawford: I didn't. You know, not having had much to base it on the at the time, I just thought that, you know, it was a job. They provided whatever uniform I needed. We had an employee dining room. You know, being a fairly large establishment, you know, pay was fairly regulated. You know, everybody got paid on the same time, same day. It was a job. I didn't think it was anything it was anything spectacular. It was work.

Q: How did you get along with other people who worked there?

Crawford: Pretty decent. As I said, it became known after while that I had one aunt working the tea room, one aunt working the first basement level in the clothing department, and so, you know, a lot of the other salespeople knew that I had relatives there in the store. I was known to be somebody, you know, who hustled, did his job. I was asked for in a couple of occasions to work other sections.

Q: Given the nature of Bamberger's, we know that there were African-Americans or minorities as well as white folk working there. How did the races get along?

Crawford: For the most part, I think we got along pretty well. I can remember that my aunt would introduce me to her white co-workers, and there was always pleasantness among us. There were the few knucklehead white guys who, you know, could be crude and rude. But in most cases, when you realize the education level of them, you realize they weren't really very bright. Did not find, those white folks who if they were not comfortable being around us were at least astute enough for the most part to keep it to themselves.

Q: How were you treated by your supervisors?

Crawford: In virtually all cases pretty well. But I have to preface this by saying that I was six foot two, weighed better than two hundred pounds most of that time, and was, you know, while having gone to pot somewhat now, had not in those days. I don't think too many people were too eager to push me or put me the wrong way. So it was rare. Not too many folks ever really tried to get on my bad side.

Q: Well, in general, were all of the employees treated approximately the same?

Crawford: I don't know of many situations or time when folks weren't. I'm not saying it didn't

happen, and that there might not have been some folks who were struggling around there. But for the most part, I don't know of any immediate situation where that was the case.

Q: Were certain jobs reserved for certain groups of people?

Crawford: I did notice that when, even when, like salesmen that I talked about that I played cards for were all furniture salesmen. I don't know that during my time in Bamberger's there was ever a black man that sold furniture, and I do know that, you know, as I said I believe they changed them over from commission to straight salary. Where during the days of commission, there definitely was not any black men working in that position. Curiously enough, the head furrier when I worked at, when I was in that department, was a black man. But he was the most knowledgeable. Jim McMurrian I believe his name was. I might have the name wrong. But he was a black man.

Q: Was there an employee union at Bam's?

Crawford: I think so, but I don't remember having went to any dealing with them if they were. I think there was a union. Yes. Yes, there was. I remember being very upset that out of my first paycheck the union took their dues.

Q: Were there ever any strikes?

Crawford: During my time there. No. I think there may have been one occasion when there might have been some talk about a strike, but we never had occasion to go on during the time I worked there.

Q: What was your next job after you left Bam's?

Crawford: I was a member of the Black Youth Organization known as the BYO. And we decided to start a school here which became the Chad School. I was one of the nineteen through

the early twenty year olds. We ranged in age from, some folks as young as thirteen, fourteen, up to early twenties, maybe even thirties, who decided that perhaps we could put together a school that worked better than what we were seeing happening in the Newark School System, this is now 69, 70. We started what is known as the Chad School. And I left Bamberger's to become the first maintenance man at the Chad School.

Q: Tell me more about the organization of Chad School. Who were the administrators, the teachers, how many classrooms, how many students were there when the Chad?

Crawford: Okay. The Chad School original administrator was a gentleman named Clifton Carter. His nickname was Cheese. In fact, Clif just died a few months ago. Clif Carter and Betty, her name was Betty Jane Nash, she was the first principal of the facility. We had approximately, also using the Y, had a satellite boom at that time called the Flicker House which was located on Clinton Avenue. Chad was located at 78th and Clinton Avenue. Flicker House was 82 Clinton Avenue and was an old building. We must have had eight to ten classes. My mother was also one of the first teachers we drafted. She was working as a teacher's aide for the Newark School System, and my sister and I talked her into coming Chad and becoming one of the first teachers there at Chad.

Q: Now these buildings that Chad occupied, they were residential buildings, were they not?

Crawford: These were residential buildings which we by our own hands refurbished to be classrooms in all cases.

Q: Did you ever do any casual or any part time work, Ed, when you were working like at Macy's at Bamberger's, or after you went to Chad School, did you take any part time jobs anywhere?

Crawford: Well, I was still playing music. So that was something that I was still doing at that time. I had gone to Arts High for music so I was playing my string base, electric base, and working with

jazz groups, backing up singers. So that was stuff that I was doing along with also working at the school.

Q: Were you ever unemployed?

Crawford: On several occasions. In fact, in 70 after the first year of the school, I decided that I wanted to do some other things. I got married in 70 as we were closing out the school year. And one thing that we had talked about was that I had decided in 69 to refuse the draft. Had gone down to the Draft Board, and on that particular day, on my induction day, had refused to be inducted and had been arrested and had a draft case going for several years, in fact. In fact, it wasn't until 1971 until my draft case was finally dealt with by way of dismissal by the courts. But I said all that to say that after leaving Chad I attempted to go to work for Bell, Western Electric. Was denied because of the status of my draft situation. Bell Labs, I had a chance to go to work for them, but was not able to get that job based on the draft status. So it kind of stymied me for a couple seconds there, and a very dear friend loaned me a dollar to pay the toll going into Staten Island and a dollar to put some gas in the car, and I went over the Staten Island to what is now the Staten Island Governmental Center, what was known as Willowbrooks, school whatever, I'd have to think for a second to remember the actual name that we went by in those days. But it was the largest retardation institution in the country, approximately in the world, with over seven thousand residents. I worked that job for close to five years.

Q: And these were retarded people you say?

Crawford: Retarded people.

Q: What were their ages?

Crawford: From babies up through geriatrics.

Q: How long were you unemployed?

Crawford: From June until October of 1970 when I was, I found work out at Willowbrook. I don't think I was unemployed again by choice, well I won't say unemployed because I worked in music from 75 pretty consistently through until about 85.

Q: What were the common occupations for black men and women in Newark as you grew up here?

Crawford: Factories, a lot of people I knew were working for Ford Motors, for GM, you know, out in some of the outlying areas. They were commuting back and forth to Newark at several of the auto plants. A lot of factory work, Western Electric as I had mentioned. There was a toy company also that had a lot of folks working for it. I can't remember the name of it.

Q: I remember, but I can't think of the name of it right now either. It was like a sweatshop type thing.

Crawford: Yeah. It was a toy company that was a big employer. Basically, not a lot of skilled labor. We made up more of the unskilled labor force. Newark, few folks that were civil service employees. Through the church, one thing I always noticed was a lot of folks there were civil service, board of education, both teachers and in the janitorial services a lot of the people, court system. We were, you know, civil servants, labor. I think that can best describe what most folks were doing.

Q: When industry began to leave the area and those kinds of jobs were no longer available, what kind of work did blacks do then?

Crawford: For my generation and the one in front of me, most of the gentlemen in the generation in front of me were for the most part either able to hold onto their job based off of the longevity

they already in. So that as places downsized these were the gentlemen with the twenty, twenty-five years in so they were in the last crews of jobs to a lot of these places. As the place finally closed, they were now suddenly losing their jobs. But held their jobs for the longest point because they had been there the longer time. For my generation, we seemed to have turned towards the correctional facilities as one of our employers. Lot of folks with the wherewithal have left the area to follow jobs where they went. And a lot of folks from the generation behind me seemed to be struggling to find work. Those in the early, the fellows from the latter teens, from say seventeen through thirty or so, are having the biggest struggle to find work. They're doing, a lot of guys seem to be doing things like security work. And then I know guys who are tying to head up entrepreneurial things. They're opening up, you know, incense shops. They're opening up their own clothing shops. You know, there are various things guys are trying. But within my age group, I think a lot of us have either caught on with, you know, the State, things like that. Some were wise enough to stay in school and get their degrees and put them to good use. So it varies.

As I said, the generation in front of me for the most part a lot of the gentlemen seem to have managed to get to retirement. Not necessarily as financially well off as they would liked to have been, but at least with some income still coming in. For my generation, if we intend to be working, maybe not necessarily doing what we truly wanted to do, but we managed to find work out there and do what we had to do. But that generation behind me, they're struggling.

Q: Do you see where the change of general circumstances in Newark, for instance, like with politics and commerce and, have made a difference in the ability of black folk to get and keep jobs or to earn, you know, to earn a relatively decent living? Or do you think that education or the lack of education has played any role in the circumstances that you just talked about?

Crawford: Big role. Big role. When you look at the fact that from, I guess, 1970 on, as we get our first black mayor, a lot of our councilman are now changing over to black men, we have had a semblance of being in charge. But when you look beyond that facade there, you find that until just recently public works was run by white folks. That when you got down to department levels of



the city government, that wasn't necessarily black folks. When you look behind the president of the board of the ed or the superintendent to who were the people running department heads and the assistant superintendents and all, these weren't black folks. So in the real running of the operations, it wasn't necessarily us that was doing that anyway. But that in the educational system, we've allowed the kids to become less educated to the point that we've got young men who just see no value in going to school. But yet in still they don't, there's no way for them to go to work out here. There aren't a lot of jobs available to them. They don't have, if they've not learned the stick-to-itiveness of going to school, how do you learn to go to work at a job and do it consistently? I'm disappointed in where I see the school system having gone to. I chose not to stay in school, but I had the ability to go to school. I got accepted into college. These kids can't even get into colleges, much less want to go to them. And when you look at the situation and realize that at one level we have been the people in charge, we seem not to have held up our end of the responsibility when the Board of Education has basically been, the board itself has had black representation now for well over twenty years. But yet we still, our school system has managed to decline in its effectiveness all through that time. I personally was not that upset that the State came in, although I have no great illusions that the State coming in is going to be a panacea of great things in any immediate future. I think that that's a long-term project.

Q: Do you think that there's something that we as a people, African-Americans, are doing or not doing that causes us to be where we are in terms of the quality of education for our children and in terms of our own economic success or lack thereof?

Crawford: Yes. I think that we've allowed the extended family that becomes the cohesive neighborhood to break apart. Maybe that's because folks are coming and going and moving in and out to the point where we just don't know each other. Maybe it's also that we have not extended ourselves to know our neighbors well. I think that we've allowed the Board of Education to exist and do its thing in somewhat of a vacuum without the neighborhood of Newark stopping and saying, wait a minute. We don't understand what's going on. We need to see more results. I think that within our church structures, we need to use that a vehicle to become more community

minded. In that through the church, if the church rallies behind that leadership, to make it a point to see that a certain percentage of their membership goes to the Board of Ed meeting, and that's done on a city-wide level, things don't happen in the vacuums that it's happened in around here. When my children came out of Chad School, I decided that I needed to become involved the Board of Education doings because after all, my kids were in their school system. I got on committees. I tried to function. And I found that we think that a public meeting is, what I discovered was public meetings are not the forum where work is done. That committee meetings. Those meetings held in Cedar Street during other times is when budgets are decided, when policy is decided as to where money will be spent. And if we're not involved in those meetings, then coming out to a Board of Ed meeting when the budget is voted on is too late. Because all the decisions about that budget was done months before in many other meetings. And if you don't, you know, if you weren't involved then, merely sitting in this audience now to see the nine board members or however many sit there and say yes or no, it's too late. We're talking about a half a billion dollars spent in New Jersey on education, in Newark on education, most of which coming from the State, and we really don't know how it's done, what was done, and why it was done til after the fact.

Q: Do you feel that the church is active enough in the bringing influence to bear on the quality of education for our children?

Crawford: No. No. I think that we do not utilize the congregations. We do not utilize our memberships in the NAACP that most black churches support on one level or another. We do not use those vehicles to the extent of, you know, holding our politicians nor our educators accountable for what they're doing. They do not see enough faces coming to see them consistently enough to hold them accountable. And I would hope that, and it's things, I've talked with my pastor about. You know, the fact that we need to have ongoing working committees in churches that are delegated to be responsible, going to these meetings, coming back to our own church meetings, and reporting back to the congregation. This is what happened when I, you know, I was at this Board of Ed meeting. This is what they're talking about, and we need to have people

charged from within our church to sit on the finance committee of the Board of Ed, to sit on the building, the capital committee of the Board of Ed. To sit on these committees. Because they state that they welcome the community's participation. Well, they have to state that. I mean, it's not, whether they want to or not, they must state it. Where we fall down is we don't take them up on it.

Q: So then you don't, do you think that there should be collaboration among church leaders so that everybody is reading from the same page, so to speak?

Crawford: Yes. Through all our communities, we all send our children to these schools. So therefore we have a vested interest between the Muslims, all of us have a vested interest in these schools working. So therefore we need to all be sending people to these meetings. We need to all know that Calvary Baptist, St. James AME, that Bethany, that all these churches have viable committees with people that are charged with being at these meetings, knowing what's going on and bringing it back to their churches.

Q: What church do you belong to, Mr. Crawford?

Crawford: I belong to Bethany Baptist Church. I have been going to Bethany since a toddler. I should say probably even longer than that. My grandfather started going to Bethany in 1919. The family joined him in New Jersey in 1921, and my mother's family has been going to Bethany it will be eighty years in another couple.

Q: How active has your religious life been?

Crawford: It has had its spurts. As a child, I was there every Sunday. I was there on a Wednesday for choir rehearsal. I was there for Baptist Youth Fellowship on Friday. As I finished high school, I thought I no longer needed that so I walked away for a number of years. As my children were being born, I felt that, I also understood that it had done valuable things for me. I

wanted my children to have that experience in their life. So my wife and I, my wife and my mother nudged, cajoled, fussed with, until I started going back to church again. And I have been very active. My work situation has diminished my participation at this time, but there have been times when I was very active within the church.

Q: What positions did you hold in the church?

Crawford: I have been on the trustee board. I have, in fact, been the chairman of the trustee board. I am a member of the usher board, nurses unit.

END SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE; BEGIN SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO

Q: Continue what roles did you play and what offices you held in your church.

Crawford: Okay. As I stated, I have been chairman of the trustee board. Various clubs and auxiliaries within the church. I was on our building fund committee. Let me see, I said the usher board, the men's club. I have tried to show my kids my involvement in church that is more than just a social affair. That for me religion works cause I'm trying to work on living.

Q: You're also an instrumentalist with some of the choirs at the church.

Crawford: Ah yes. Thank you Ms. Brickus. Yes, I've played for a number of the choirs in the church. The youth and children's choir, the new voices. I played with most of the mass choirs we've had. I've done several of the Messiah concerts we've done. That is still one of the, music is still one of my major loves and that's good. I find that the church has been one of the easier avenues for still being able to continue to pursue.

Q: What do you know about the history of Bethany?

Crawford: Well, you know, I obviously about its beginning., Bethany started in 19, excuse me, in 1871. Twenty-six, twenty-eight people in a, in somebody's house, living room. And so we're talking about a church that's just about to become a hundred and twenty-six years, twenty-seven years old now. And over the years, it's a church that has grown, felt its impact from folks moving out into the outlying areas. Obviously as people have become more economically stable and things have gotten better, folks have moved from the inner city of Newark out into some of the outer areas. So we've gone from being what might have been more of a neighborhood church to being more of a commuter church in our latter years now. I've always likened the congregation of Bethany to basically civil service. We do have some members who are very well off, but by and large if you looked over the congregation of Bethany, most folks are hard working, civil service and/or that type of job people. We've had a very interesting history. I grew up under Reverend William P. Hayes, who was a gentleman of very fair complexion, extremely fair complexion. In fact, there's a housing unit, a housing development in Newark named after him. It was felt by those of us of a darker complexion that the hierarchy of Bethany back in those days was based upon on closely in complexion you were to Reverend Hayes. Needless to say for the last thirty-three years, we've had Reverend J. J. Scott as our pastor, a man who is more his complexion with myself. And that does not seem to be one of the situations that Bethany now goes through. We seem to have weathered that particular situation and come to the other side without much of a. I think we weathered that pretty well. We're a church that's still. I think we're transitioning again now. We're seeing that the older members are now starting to pass away, and the youth of Bethany traditionally has left the church upon graduation, and it's taken generally us having our own families before we've been coming back to the church. Subsequently, we lose a lot of our, of the ingrown Bethanyites because a lot don't come back or just in moving away whatever. So that looking at the membership of Bethany now from say membership twenty-five years ago, Bethany's changed a lot. A lot of that group of folks who made Bethany what it was, who put the money together that moved Bethany from 117 West Market Street to 275 West Market Street has changed, you know, rather substantially over the years.

Q: Do you think these transitions has had any detrimental effect to the quality of service that

Bethany provides or to the continuity of Bethany's effectiveness?

Crawford: I think that in some places we're doing fantastic work. We've done some really, really tremendous things. We had an AID ministry that was, I think, touching a lot of people in a very positive way. I know folks from outside the church who, you know, in other situations that I dealt with them that talk about Bethany about the aid it gave them within the whole HIV world and what they're doing there. I think we're still attempting to identify who and what we want to be about at this time. As we're bringing in this newer congregation, they're bringing in a lot of ideas. I think our service to our community out there is growing. I mean, it has its fits of starting, slow down, but I think we're still trying to be of service to the community around us. The service itself within the church, I think we're, I don't, I have good feelings for Bethany. I think God still emanates from us. That we still are about some very positive things. I believe that time will show that with prayer that we'll still be a viable role within the community around us. And hopefully we'll even move on to do some significant stuff.

Q: So Dr. Hayes and Dr. Scott are the only two pastors that you remember having pastored Bethany?

Crawford: Yes.

Q: How would you compare those two men?

Crawford: Well, I probably know Dr. Scott. No doubt about it, I know Dr. Scott better than I did Reverend Hayes. Because Reverend Hayes for me was an old man when, you know, as my consciousness of the church and of him and what was going on around me was going on. Reverend Hayes retired from Bethany, and I just remember a silver haired old man. And as a child, he did not really seem that approachable to me. So, you know, my impressions are obviously that of a. Let's see, Reverend Hayes retired in 61, and I was baptized before he retired. But I'm an eleven year old. So, you know, I have great childlike impressions of Reverend Hayes.

Now, Reverend Scott, for me, he gets there in 63, and he is one of the first men of true color, men of true color. I mean, this was without a doubt a black man here. This was a man of pretty dark shade. And I just fell in love with him. This was a, he was one of the first true black men I've run into that was educated, that spoke well, that was smart. And I remember once asking the question when I was about sixteen or so. Reverend Scott, you're so smart. Why did you decide to be a preacher? And he just kind of chuckled and looked at me, and allowed me that question without, you know, without chewing my head off or anything. But I was really, it really impressed me to see, to have this man there. And as I said, we were a church that had come out of a period of where, you know, high yellow had its privileges or at least it was perceived that way to a lot of us. And he had to fight his way through a lot of attitude and a lot of stuff to get to be where he is today with the church. So, you know, I've identified with him to a great degree over the years.

Q: Who can you remember that you consider as outstanding members of Bethany?

Crawford: On many different levels, some of the folks that I dealt with over the years. Mrs. Giss who I think just passed away not too long ago. Was a hard working member for a lot of years. Absolum Bread, Jessie Slate. Spurgeon Robinson lead the scouts there for a number of years. He was a man who just did what he had to do with the Scouts for years. Columbus Daniels was another gentleman who ran the scouting program there for a number of years. Bill Lee has always been somewhat of a mentor and friend of mine. William Lee for a number of years at that church. Other gentleman who I've always had good relationships with was Arthur White, Deacon Arthur White. And ladies in the church, well, Eva Cook, Clara Coulson. Before them, there were, oh lord. See there you go, you've got me trying to reach back into memories that go back so far. There were a bunch of ladies in my grandmother's generation that I can, I even have a problem trying to remember their names.

Q: Well, that's okay. We won't sweat that too much.

Crawford: There were quite a few. Bethany has been an extended family to me all my life.

Q: What do you consider to be some of the major accomplishments of Bethany?

Crawford: When we were growing up, Bethany encouraged us with education. There was something that we, you know, as we were around each other, education was something that was assumed. Going to college was something that was talked about very much around the church. So that as kids that was put out there as something to reach towards. That, you know, that education was a very viable and important tool for all of us to strive for. That, as I said, the sense of family that Bethany has been was very true. I mean, with the death of different members of my family, Bethany has always rallied around us. When my mom passed away, Bethany was there for us and for me. So that I have always felt a tremendous sense of family with Bethany.

Q: What about outreach programs? What kind of community things has Bethany done?

Crawford: For us the scouting program has always been an outreach program. Because invariably in most years, we've had more neighborhood kids involved in the scouting program than we've had Bethany kids involved in the scouting program. So that that's been a big outreach for us. In the last few years, we've used sports to outreach to the kids, and we found that we've been able to bring a lot of the kids into the church by means of the basketball program, allowing them access to the gym, to the fellowship hall which also acts as a gym. Our choirs has been a major outreach program. We have kids who come in with their friends to the choir, have become more involved in other church activities. So on that level with the youth, I've seen that as a lot of our outreach. There is an outreach program into the Archbishop Walsh Homes that has provided them with their own church service and has incorporated them into the church on many occasions. And that has been something that I've really been happy and pleased to watch grow.

Q: What about support for post-secondary education? And does Bethany get involved in any support of higher education for black folk?

Crawford: We have a scholarship program which I was one of the first recipients of a scholarship.



Myself, Linda Jordan, and Deacon Jessie Harvey, and Inez Slayton's daughter whose name I forget right at the moment. But the three of us were the first recipients of scholarships for school, for post-high school education. And now I believe the church is putting out somewhere in the neighborhood of twenty thousand or more a year in scholarship to encourage kids, you know, to go on. So that is a program that over the years has grown. And I dare say that with more effort we probably could grow even more than we have. But it's an ongoing program, and we do keep in touch with the kids out there. And we have the black scout, we have a black college committee, which over the years has grown and really encouraged kids to look at our black colleges. The scholarship committee. There are a number of groups in this church that are putting their time and energy into really working on the post, you know, high school education.

Q: How much have you participated in social and cultural activities in Newark? And what social and cultural clubs, or organizations have you belonged to?

Crawford: I have been a member of the Optimist International. I am a member of the NAACP. I am an encourager of the NAACP. I am not a very active participant. But schedule more than anything has caused that. I am a member of the New Jersey Symphony Supporters. A member of BGO, the National Public Radio, and Channel 13. But I am, I try to put my money where my mouth is, my mouth where my money's going in some cases. I'm trying to raise as well rounded as possible children, and to do that, I try to expose them to a lot of different things. So I try to take advantage of the museum, the library, and as I said, we are the members of the New Jersey Symphony supporting group. So trying to show my children a well rounded person and adult.

Q: What about secret orders such as the Elks or the Masons or any bridge clubs or literary societies? Did you ever belong to any of those organizations?

Crawford: Not in any of the secret societies. Mildred Crump has been trying to get me into the bridge, into her bridge organization for some time. And I honestly can say just have not been able to put time into to sit down long enough with her and do that, although I do enjoy playing cards a

lot socially. Bridge, whisk or pinochle are some that I really enjoy. But as I said, time is hard to find. My grandfather was a Mason. I have not yet pursued that as something. I'm curious about it, have thought about it from time to time, but have not really pursued it one way or the other at this time. Culturally, I have been a member of the [?] Symphony, the Livingston Symphony. I was an alternate for the Jersey Symphony many, many years ago. So I do keep my hands in that music, classical music to a degree.

Q: Of the organizations that you talked about, did you play any particular role in any of them?

Crawford: I was the vice president of the Optimists. In others, just try to be as active as I could for most of the other organizations.

Q: How much have you participated in political activities in Newark? Like what political organizations have you ever belonged to or what political party are you a member of?

Crawford: I'm a member of the Democratic party, which actually goes against the family's tradition, cause the family was Republican. Mom, grandparents and aunts were Republican until very late in life. I guess not until Gibson in the 70s did they really, you know, start to. Perhaps they voted for Kennedy, but I suspect that they probably did not vote for Kennedy. They probably voted for --

Q: Nixon?

Crawford: Nixon. They were Republicans. But they come out of the old Republican, you know, the. Black folks for a long time were Republicans coming out of the whole Lincoln era. And it wasn't until Roosevelt that black folks started making that change to be Democrat. And I found out to my surprise in the 60s that my mom and her sisters all had been Republicans. So that kind of was. My mom was somewhat of a political animal. Not too any great extent. I've not really put a lot of time and energy into that. I've given some support to Mildred Crump during her

campaigns. Some support to Ron Rice with his campaign. Beyond that, I've not really ventured out in that world. It's not one that holds a lot of interest to me in that sense of participation. I'm sorry. A thought just hit me. I ran as a delegate for McGovern back in 72. I forgot all about that. I was going to school at Jersey City State University, and McGovern ran a campaign unlike what most traditional presidential candidates ran. He came into the City and tried to put together his own slate of candidates, of folks to run as delegates for him. And I ran, I went to the convention held in Jersey City. And myself and several other folks as a political science project from school, we ran and became delegates for McGovern. And we campaigned throughout Hudson County for McGovern that year. We were soundly trounced in the primary. And the Democratic machine won the delegates slots for the convention that year. But I ran as a delegate for George McGovern for president.

Q: Now you talked about supporting Mildred Crump and Ronald Rice in their campaigns. What were they campaigning for?

Crawford: Ron was campaigning for council member, West Ward councilman, and also his assembly seat. And Mildred had campaigned in 86 she campaigned for councilperson at large, and I worked for her campaign. I did some work for her campaign then. And she ran subsequent to that, I've tried to give her whatever support I could give her in her runs for council seat.

Q: And that was for the municipal council in Newark?

Crawford: Yes.

Q: Did you ever take part in any protest groups?

Crawford: Well, once again going back to the Bharaca days, I was in the Committee for Unified Newark, known as CFINE. And yes, I protested, we protested in front of City Hall over the lack of sanitation in the Central Ward. This was in 73. 73 we campaigned, we had several protests in

front of City Hall. Did a bit of that in those days. Picketed several auto dealerships that we felt were unfair. I've done some protesting and picketing.

Q: Who do you consider as having been outstanding leaders or members in any of those groups that you belonged to or?

Crawford: Cecil Crump was without a doubt one of the finest Optimists within the organization, Optimists International. Cecil brought me into the organization, in fact. He was also my mentor on the trustee board at Bethany, now that I'm thinking about it. Cecil was one of the finest gentleman that I've known. A gentleman by the name of Ed Napowaki was the conductor for the Bloomfield Symphony, and I truly working under his baton. Several other gentlemen, the names right now escape me. But I have found within several of the organizations the things that I have found there have been some really good people involved.

Q: Have you participated in any community activities, such as neighborhood groups or civic organizations?

Crawford: I am involved in Mildred Crump's civic organization. We have a neighborhood watch, and I am involved in that. Participation level, I have avoided taking any role of leadership cause I realize my time right now is just not such that I can commit being a leader in something and knowing that I just, my time is just really constrained these days. I have tried to be as active a participant as I can in what organizations I'm still involved in.

Q: Aside from being a consumer of regular goods and services, in what ways did you or do you participate in the economic life of the community?

Crawford: Aside from the consumer role. Very interesting question. Well, I try to make those around me aware of the inconsistencies or fallacies of this whole consumer oriented society we're now in. We're more and more being subjected to the mentality that buying, that we have to have

things, that certain things are necessary. When, in fact, when you stop and really look and examine stuff, you find that a lot of what is assumed that we need, aren't necessarily true. That, you know, that the commercials for cars, you know. If, you know, I always tell my kids. All I expect out of my car is that it start and stop. You know, that it's not brand new this year doesn't bother me a whole lot. That it runs well is about all I'm gonna worry about with it. That, you know, sneaker ads. Trying to educate myself and those around me and discuss and dialogue with folks, you know, the reality of why we buying some of this stuff we buy. Why are we purchasing some of the stuff that we run out here and go after? What is the difference between what we need and what we want?

Q: Did you ever own or operate your own business?

Crawford: Not as of yet. I have some plans in mind for some stuff that I want to pull off into the next year or so. I'm looking at some. Within the service industry, I'm looking at some stuff to work with both juveniles and possibly young adult population.

Q: Did you ever purchase stock in any black owned business or enterprise?

Crawford: No. I have not. I am interested in it, but have not really been positioned economically, my home economics to do that.

Q: In your living in Newark, growing up in the Newark community, and being a part of the Newark community from your youth, how did you get information on the news and events of the community?

Crawford: Through the church, through newspapers, through friends and family. You know, we share a lot of information. You know, I can remember folks would tell my mom about this play, or in fact that there's youth tickets for this play or whatever. So that, you know, a lot of information was shared back and forth.

Q: Did you read any black newspapers? If so, which ones? Or did you listen to a black oriented radio station?

Crawford: Growing up, I did not. As I've gotten older, the Amsterdam News has been a paper that I frequently have read. The Sun. There's a couple others that from time to time I've been able to get my hands on. But not as consistently as I'd like to.

Q: What about black oriented radio?

Crawford: As I've gotten older, I've listened to, you know, to a couple of stations from time. BAI, BLS, LIB. As I got to my adulthood, I found more black stations that I started getting into.

Q: Do you remember if there were any relationships between black Newark and other black communities in New Jersey?

Crawford: I've always had a sense that East Orange and Newark ran similar paths. Felt that there were some rivalry to it, but also some sense of that we're in this together. So, yes. I have a sense that East Orange and Newark were, you know, going down a path somewhat similar.

Q: Have you visited other black communities in the State?

Crawford: Yes. Camden, inner city Trenton, East Orange, Passaic, which is a. Well, Patterson.

END SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO; BEGIN SIDE TWO, TAPE TWO

Q: Mr. Crawford, I was asking you about the relationship between black Newark and other black communities and whether you had visited any other black communities. Now having told me of several that you did visit, why did you visit those communities?

Crawford: Friends. Well, I have friends living down in the Camden area. So from time and time I go down and visit them. I have friends and family living up in the East Oranage, Orange. So since East Orange is basically right on the border of Newark, I'm in and out of there all the time. So it's almost not like visiting as much as it's an extension, to some degree it almost feels as though it's an extension of Newark.

Q: What outstanding blacks did you meet or hear of in Newark? And when I ask that question I mean entertainers or ministers of orders or politicians or any outstanding black folk that you know of having come to Newark and did you meet any of them or see any of them while they were here?

Crawford: A recent, very recent man I got to talk with, Bobbie McVair, noted musical artist. Prior to that several sports figures, Harry Carson. Several ministers, Dr. Samuel Proctor.

Q: How about Jesse Jackson? You remember when he came to Newark?

Crawford: Jesse. Did not get to talk to Jesse. Got a chance to shake his hand, but really did not get a chance to talk with Jesse. A gentleman who I believe will be on the forefront of black life here in this country for a time to come, Reverend Al Sharpton. I believe Reverend Sharpton will be someone who bears watching, and will be on the forefront of black life for years to come.

Q: What about Dr. King? Do you remember when he came to Newark?

Crawford: When Dr. King came to Newark, I was in grade school. I believe if I'm not mistaken Dr. King came to Newark more than once. And I was fairly young the first time he came during the earlier visit. The last one I think I was away at school.

Q: What about entertainers? You remember any outstanding black entertainers?

Crawford: Well, I mean, after all, there's homegrown Sarah Vaughn. And Wayne Shorter, who I think practically all went to the same high school that I did, Arts High. Over the years, I have. Well, there was a time in the, well prior to my knowledge of and then through the 60s when Newark was a stop on the entertainment trail. So Temptations, Jerry Butler, most of the groups on their way either into New York or on their way out of New York, came through Jersey. I got to be an opening act for Jerry Butler. And I was an opening act for the Temptations. So I got to meet a lot. Sammy Davis, Jr., I was in the orchestra that worked for Sammy Davis, Jr., in the 70s. So I met quite a number of artists, some I've had occasion to be closer to than others.

Q: What do you remember about such public service servants as the Newark police, the firefighters, and social workers? And the question there is were there any blacks in those organizations as you can remember?

Crawford: As a youngster, we had some representation within the police force, even less within the fire department. Although I can remember even when I was a Boy Scout, that there were several black men within the fire departments, and that would put them in the early 60s. A different persona of the black folks then, versus the younger black men that are in those fields today. They fought through a lot more to get to positions they got in those days. And I think as a community we respected them more for the positions they held. It's now so much more commonplace to see a black fireman, to see a black policeman. Until we don't credit them with the achievement that really is. And so I think we as a community take it a lot more for granted now when we see the minorities in these fields and doing these things than it really deserves. I think it still deserves a lot more credit and a lot more bravos for being where they are and doing what they do than they really get. I think that part of the problem with lawlessness here in Newark is that we need to adopt those black firemen, policemen as our own and make it more of a sense of community with them to get the sense of community back that we need. I think that we've let that get away from us to too much of a degree.

Q: Well, do you think though that when we don't perhaps make as much of it as you think we



ought to, do you think it's because we know deep within that's how it ought to be?

Crawford: Okay. Point taken. I think that's true too. But if we don't put a value. I think that's true. But for our youths, for our children, they don't have the sense of accomplishment that those people in those positions are because they're too far removed from what it took to get them even into those positions. You know, I'm of the generation that bridges the gap of not having to having. You know, of not being able to get into a lot of the more prestigious universities, to now a lot of black athletes don't know anything about going to black schools cause they're being recruited to go to these other schools. So I'm of that generation that bridges that gap. But my children don't know the struggle of not being, where you didn't even think of going to some of those schools cause it just wasn't a given that you could go. That you didn't think about certain positions, civil service positions, because it just wasn't out there to win those positions. So while yes it should be, we're still not that far removed from when it just was not.

Q: Okay. I see what you're saying. When you and others in your neighborhood got in trouble or needed help to solve a problem, to whom did you go and why and how effective were they in helping with the problems?

Crawford: Well, first the parents. As a child, first always, always went to our parents. I mean, that was an automatic. From there, it was dealt with within the family, extended family. And to outside extended family, to, okay, I can think of the church as being one place that we went. We had a lot of direction from the church to those who had the capabilities to help. I'm trying to think of the early black councilman's name that was somebody that was always one that folks went to a lot.

Q: Irving Turner.

Crawford: Irving Turner. You know. The church was a clearinghouse for getting a lot of help to people. Through the church. Because obviously when the church sent you to somebody, that

kind of got the door open to get you into to see.

Q: Now, how was black Newark perceived and was the community seen as a ghetto or slum? And I think in order to answer that question you'd have to take into consideration the physical surroundings of the geographic areas where black folk live as opposed to where white folk live. And how do you think each group, the blacks and/or the whites, perceive the black community?

Crawford: Okay. Pre-1967 I think for the most part, for instance, the South Ward was basically multiple family dwellings, some single family, but multiple family dwellings generally. Two, three family apartment houses, things like that. Still South Ward was still fairly heavily integrated. Fairly heavily integrated. I don't think white folks perceived too much of a ghetto situation because they lived right in among us. So it would have been kind of hard for them to see black folks in a ghetto when your neighbor, when you look out your window and your neighbor is that black person. I say pre-67 because with the riot or as I choose to say rebellion, white flight grabbed hold tremendously. Cause I can remember in the Wickwake section of the South Ward, heavily Jewish. A lot of my teachers from the Clinton Place lived over on that side of town, and within months, year at tops, they were gone. And Central Ward suffered the most from the 67 rebellion. And to this day it's probably not yet turned the corner. The outlying wards to a lesser degree cause, I think, Vailsburg has quietly lost quite a few of the white folks that lived there. But it took a lot longer for them to decide. They didn't leave as rapidly as the folks did in the South Ward. It took them a lot longer to decide to make the move, but they did do that. You have an older generation of white folks up in that Vailsburg area, if, in fact, we still have them. Unfortunately, I think the Central Ward has come to epitomize Newark. And that does a disservice. Because as you start to move out from the Central Ward, you find that we still have communities of black folks that are still striving to keep communities up. You know, that are still trying to hold their property values together. You know, and so that, you know, one ward has to some, to a great degree, kind of become the identity for a whole city. And that's somewhat of an injustice. Then again, realizing that city government lies within that ward. You know, that the business district is part of that ward. You know, it's understandable to a degree why it happens that way, but yet, it still it's

unfortunate that an identity is pretty much developed out of one area.

Q: Well, that could possibly be because the ward boundaries have changed over the years as the population shifted.

Crawford: Yes.

Q: So for the most part, the business district is now located in the East Ward.

Crawford: Actually, the East Ward. Well, the East Ward in some ways is almost like its own little enclave. And surprising enough even within the Boy Scouts we found that to be true. That the East Ward does its thing independent of the rest of Newark. They attempt to do that within the educational structure. If you remember, Councilman Martinez, when the State was getting ready to talk about coming in, said, you know, take over the rest of them. We're okay down here. You know, within the Boy Scouts we get the same message is sometimes heard. Worry about the rest of them, we're okay down here. You know. They've done a much better job and maybe it's because they are a smaller, self-contained community of holding their thing together down there. But, yes, and in business, I was talking more of the. Let's face it, Bamberger's no longer exists, which became Macy's. No longer exists in the central shopping area. Hanes is gone. Kresges. You know, the downtown shopping area is not the downtown shopping area that it once was.

Q: No way. Ed, when you grew up in Newark, did all classes of African-Americans live close to you? We've talked about the other ethnic groups that lived in the community. But now, there has always been a stratification if you will in terms of economics for black folk. There were those who were professionals who had, you know, they had a higher standard of living than many of the rest of us. So I'm wondering did all of those kinds of people live together in the same neighborhoods?

Crawford: No. My neighborhood was a working class neighborhood. The fathers up and down the road, you know, worked in the shops, postmen, you know, as I said, civil service. Those, there

were not a lot of quote, unquote, professional men or women around us in our neighborhood. That was not the nature of the neighborhood I lived in.

Q: Other than white store owners and other whites with a vested economic interest, do you recall any other whites having an interest in the black community?

Crawford: As a child, yes. You know, as I said, we had neighbors. I knew two Irish women who lived right next door to us. My dad and I used to cut the lawn for them. Cause their family, they had no children. The never married so they had no children. And their relatives visited occasionally. But basically, we in the neighborhood looked out for each other. So, you know, we shoveled their walk. We, you know, helped keep their property up while we were keeping our property up.

Q: I think when I mentioned if there were any other whites who had an interest in the black community, I think I'm referring to an interest in the improvement of the quality of life in the black community. For instance, like the quality of education or economic progress for black folk. Were there ever any white folks that you know of who had interests in those areas of black life?

Crawford: Yes. In fact, one of the California politicians now, Tom Haden. I can remember him coming to our house, sitting down with my mom in our kitchen, talking about, you know, and this is obviously his younger days when he was more of the militant leftist than he is today. I mean, he obviously cleaned his act up a tad now. But when Tom Haden was more of the militant leftist that he was, I can remember him sitting in our kitchen, with my mom, going over some of the stuff that he was fervent about at that time and place. Teachers seemed to have a much deeper interest in what was going on in those communities. Paul Reilly, who became a assistant mayor to Gibson during the earlier term, Ken Gibson's earlier terms, was one of my teachers. And he was someone who, you know, I think cared about the community that was around the school in those days. Some of the other, the principal was a fairly caring person in those days. There were some, there were some who, perhaps it was their political agenda that motivated them, but there were some

white folks moving throughout the community in those days that, in fact, much more so than in today's times. It is rare to find a white person or white people moving throughout our area nowadays with altruistic good intentions in hand.

Q: Ed, do you remember any racial, any incidents of racial discrimination? And did you ever experience any or do you know of anyone else who experienced racial discrimination?

Crawford: In fact, one of the few times that I did as a kid. I was, it was within the scouting structure. And it wasn't here in Newark. It was out in, oh, Blairstown and somewhere where you ran into. And I got to give credit to my scoutmaster. We did not let it go down without a protest. We had, you know, somewhere we came into a store, and the store owner tried to get a little bent out of shape, and the scout master says, well, you know, obviously if this is the case, I don't think the boys need to spend their hard earned money in this store. That was, worked for us. I think the guy realized after that how, you know, him trying to put us down, he wound up losing a considerable amount of money that a bunch of young kids was about to spend.

Q: What about in Newark per se? Did you ever hear of or witness any racial discrimination at all?

Crawford: Heard of. You know, we'd hear of some. I did not witness very much. I can remember during the, after, subsequent to the rebellion of 67, I was still working at Bamberger's, and I got on the elevator, and this might have been like the day after that. I got on the elevator for work that day, and this white lady if there'd have been a way to expand that car by twice its size, she'd have got as far over on the next wall as she could have got. And it bothered me on a couple levels because the day before she wouldn't have thought of doing it. And now in one day's time, I went from just being another employee with her to being a black man she suddenly became scared of. And I really hadn't done anything any different. I had on my beige Bamberger's jacket that I worked in. So it was clear that I was a Bamberger's employee. You know, it wasn't like I was just some joe blow off the street. I was a Bamberger's employee. She had to have known that. But, yet, and still just the sheer fact that I was black and there had been some problems the day before

caused this woman to suddenly be scared of me when, you know, she wouldn't have thought that the day before. So that bothered me cause, you know, that's when I realized that it wasn't always just a personal thing. Sometimes it's just the, you know, it was situation. You know, she heard about the riot, you know, about the riot, rebellion, and now suddenly, oh my God, what's he going to do. No more than I was going to do to you the day before lady.

Q: There was someone on Springfield Avenue who was known as the Mayor of Springfield Avenue. Do you have any idea who that was?

Crawford: No. I do not. Now I've heard that statement. But Springfield Avenue wasn't within my travels for the most part. So I really didn't know a lot. You know, I've only heard of that. Do not know a lot about that.

Q: Well, what do you remember regarding such local personalities as William Ashby, who was an early black social worker; Meyer Ellingstein, Newark's first Jewish mayor; Prosper Brewer, who was Newark's first black policeman; and Irving Turner, Newark's first black elected official. Do you recall?

Crawford: I knew of Mr. Ashby. Know of family members of Mr. Ashby. In fact, a funny thing happened at my junior high graduation. A couple of kids were named Ashby and their mother was at the graduation. And they mentioned, we were talking to Mr. Harlold Ashby's wife, and in fact, this other lady said, I started to stand up because I thought they were talking about me. So I've been aware of Mr. Ashby's family and his background. Knew about Prosper cause anytime you ran into a black policeman as a kid you wondered if this wasn't Prosper. Then, you know, who was this guy cause there wasn't many. I mean, as a kid, it was truly a rare sight to run into a black policeman. The others are names to me. I mean, did not know much about them or their history in Newark.

Q: Meyer Ellingstein is the first Jewish mayor and, of course, you did talk about Irving Turner.

Okay. What do you remember regarding black institutions like hospitals, hotels and banks, and where were they located?

Crawford: Know about the first black hospital, but believe it was out of existence by the time of our arrival here in Newark. Don't know about any black institutions until they put together the bank. Oh, I guess that's what, twenty years ago now?

Q: Approximately, yes.

Crawford: Approximately twenty years ago now.

Q: City National.

Crawford: Yeah. You know, something that you kind of wondered why we didn't have it, but we didn't have it.

Q: What do you recall regarding the kinds of music that one heard in black Newark? Do you remember listening to and/or seeing musicians perform jazz, gospel or the blues? At what places and what musicians?

Crawford: Well, from the time I was fourteen on, I was slipping in and out of the Twenty Grant, Mr. Wonderful, the Golden Wheel. Cause I was a musician, I am a musician. So I was running in and out of the Key Club, Cadillac Club. Fortunately I was big for my age so that I didn't get questioned enough. I was wise enough to stay away from the bar itself so that they didn't have to throw me out. So I was in and out of a lot of clubs. Sparky J's, which is a club of the latter times. It wasn't one of the early 60s clubs. But I got a chance to see a lot of music and the whole spectrum. I, you know, it's interesting because certain clubs catered to certain kind of music. If you were into blues, there were certain clubs that were blues clubs. If you were into jazz, then there was a different type of club you went to for that. So, you know, I was very fortunate in that

in those days I got around to a lot of different places, playing music and following a lot of music. So I got my share of different music.

Q: What about gospel music? Once you passed that stage where you slipped in and out of the clubs.

Crawford: Well, growing up in Bethany did not afford me a true picture on gospel music, I guess until I got grown. Because Bethany was a very staid, reserved type of a church. Our service was very, one thing that we retained between Reverend Hayes and Reverend Scott that the service is a fairly reserved, conservative, staid service. You're not apt to see folks get spirit too often, too frequently in Bethany. It's gotten better over the years, but as a child, I could remember that when a baby cried all the elders of the church looked at that mother and expected you to get up, you and that baby, and go on downstairs because you were disrupting the service. So, we are getting better. There is more emotions in our service now than there has been. And one would hope that over the years there would become more emotion in that church. So that to me, gospel was something that I discovered really after I got grown.

Q: What about, in your experience going to the different kinds of clubs, do you remember any outstanding musicians who were not native Newarkers who came to perform in Newark?

Crawford: Yeah. Bobbie Bluebland in his early days. John Lucien. Oh lord, the list is so long cause I really got a chance in those days to see Dizzie Gillespie, to see Myles on one occasion, Miss Coultrain.

Q: Myles. Myles Davis?

Crawford: Myles Davis. Miss Coultrain had come through several times. I missed them. By the time I really was looking, he died before I really got a chance to catch up with him at any point. But towards the latter part of the jazz scene Newark, because jazz in Newark kind of died. But,



you know, in that 64, 65, 66, I was able to catch some of those last scenes of the jazz era go through. What happened then in the 60s, the MoTown reviews that came through I saw quite a bit of all their stuff. Teddy Powell, who was one of the entrepreneurs of the 60s, produced a lot of the shows that went on in those days. TP Productions saw a lot of stuff. Worked, as I said, as an opening acts in a lot of stuff during those days. Ray Dandridge who was trying to emulate Teddy's work and trying to get, trying to put together some of the same type of stuff. I did a lot of work with Ray Dandridge in those days. So, you know, I was getting a chance to get a lot of exposure. Trying to think of some of the names. But I saw the wide variety of artists come through Newark.

Q: In what leisure time activities, Ed, do you participate or did you ever participate in?

Crawford: Bowling, which here in Newark has taken a tremendous hit because I don't think there's a bowling alley left in the area now. But that was something that I always enjoyed. And we had Lyons Lane. We had a bowling alley on Springfield Avenue. There was a, well, just as you came out of Newark going into East Orange there used to be a bowling alley on Central Avenue. Bowling was something I really enjoyed.

END SIDE TWO, TAPE TWO; BEGIN SIDE ONE, TAPE THREE

Q: Mr. Crawford, I believe the last question I asked you was about leisure activities that you participated in, and you talked to me about your bowling activities. Were there any others? Movies? Were there any others?

Crawford: At one point, played a lot of boys sports. So, you know, in the back park we played basketball, ice skating, in its time, I haven't done it in years, but did do ice skating.

Q: What kind of sports did you play?

Crawford: Basketball, baseball, ran track in high school. Still enjoy as a spectator all of those

sports. Even now, like to get out with the kids and get to the park, you know, play some sports. And still, we still have some of the most beautiful parks around at time. Some of the most beautiful parks around.

Q: What about the Newark Eagles? You remember the Newark Eagles?

Crawford: I know of the Newark Eagles. They pre-dated me by, I think their time was ending as I was a very young child. My dad had played some semi-pro sports so I know of the Eagles, but not was ever there. Their time was ending as I was a very young child.

Q: So you did not get a chance to attend any of their games?

Crawford: No. Sadly.

Q: Were there ever black athletic or sports events that you attended in Newark?

Crawford: I can remember the Globe Trotters coming to town on several occasions, playing over at the old Armory off of, what's that, Sussex Avenue. Sussex Avenue Armory, which isn't even there anymore. And I can remember when the Globe Trotters came there. One of the few black sports, all black sports teams that I remember coming into town. And that was, like I said, pretty much gone before my consciousness of black sports really developed.

Q: What do you recall regarding the seamy side of black Newark life?

Crawford: Didn't see much of it until I was in my upper teens, eighteen, nineteen or so forth. Alberta and Ed Crawford did not allow Eddie, Jr. to be running the streets too much. So, Ed didn't see a whole lot, Ed wasn't out there to see a whole lot of that. So, I was, I'd say, you know, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen by the time I'm out there, you know, to start seeing what's going on and knowing that there's places that I need not be, and don't want to be caught around. So, I didn't

see a lot of, as you say, seamy side of Newark.

Q: Well, precisely what was going on in those areas that you knew that you should avoid?

Crawford: Gambling was always something that was not an activity that I was going to be part of or be around too much. As a kid, up until the latter part of the 60s, drugs were not that prevalent a situation. You know, the situation that you see now with kids on the corner dealing, and, you know, and folks wandering up and down the street panhandling money, that just was not something we saw much of during the 60s. You know, up through my youth. So I did not see that. As far the prostitution and all that, wasn't something that was in our areas to any degree that you want to see and notice it. So, you know, if you knew about or pimp whatever, it, you know, only because somebody else told you that was he was. And I might not have believed them if they told me he was anyway. Because he just wasn't somebody I saw much of.

Q: Do you recall any black gangsters in Newark?

Crawford: Some faint rumors. As I said, you know, that was not the world that I traveled in. So there wasn't much, you know, I learned probably more from Nathan Heard's book, Calver Street, than I'd ever known in my own time. Because it just was not the world. My world was school, church, scouts, home. You know, that was the world as a youth that I traveled in til I pretty much I was grown. And then I was, it was the world of work and family so that I didn't have a lot of time for that world too much.

Q: Okay. What do you recall regarding public education in Newark? How well academically did black students seem to perform and how were they treated by white teachers and/or white students?

Crawford: Okay. I think that the educational system in Newark was a better system through the, up through the 60s. I think teachers believed that they did a good job and wanted to do a good

job. So that, they had an ego about what they were doing, and so they were at least going to do their job. Now, if you didn't get it that was only your problem. But they were at least going to do their job. Most of the teachers I had were about teaching. You know, they did not have behavioral problems per se, so we, a lot of time was put into active teaching. Most teachers when they found that parents were going to be involved, and I think we had a much better partnership between teachers and parents in the 50s and 60s. The PTAs were stronger. My mother was president of Bergen Street School PTA for nine years. She was president of PTA after there were none of us in the school. Finally, had to say, why you the president there? You know, we don't even go to the school anymore. So, you know, my family found education important. Teachers knew they had to educate Ed Crawford or at least do their part of it so that if Ed Crawford wasn't educated it was strictly Ed Crawford's fault and not their fault. So, because they were going to be held accountable by Alberta and Ed, Sr. So, therefore, should Ed Crawford turn out to be a dummy, it was going to have to be strictly Ed Crawford's problems and not the teacher's. So the accountability was there. Alberta would show up at school any time for any reason. When you're president of the PTA for nine years, you're in the school a lot. You know the teachers on a first name basis. So therefore the partnership was very strong. For me, teachers were going to at least do their part to see I got educated. So I think that teachers had an ego about them. They wanted to be known as being good teachers, and they were going to do their part to be a good teacher.

Q: Did you see a difference then in the level of achievement by black students then as compared to now.

Crawford: Yes. The other part of your question before, how were we perceived. We were just as smart or smarter than other kids. You know, no child, I don't think the white kids thought themselves to be any smarter because in fact they weren't. I was getting the same As that they were getting. I was knocking out the test scores as well. Embarrassing some of them because I did even better than a lot. So that I don't think there was any perceived notion on the part of white kids living in Newark in the 50s and 60s that they were any better off than us. They didn't do any better in the test than we did. And in some cases, we blew them out of stuff. The perception of

the teachers was that I think they just had students out there in front of them. Because the parents made sure that they knew these were kids that had to be educated.

Q: Were black kids involved in intramural sports and extracurricular activities?

Crawford: Yes. All the way through, I mean, we played in the orchestra, we were on the newspaper, we were in, you know, all the sporting events. It was school for everybody.

Q: Do you recall any outstanding black teachers?

Crawford: Now curiously enough, I didn't get my first black teacher until I got to junior high. And the funny part of that was he left for Vietnam right after. He was my homeroom teacher, and I believe he also, I might have had him for English. And within the first six months of that school year, even less perhaps, he had left to go to Vietnam. I had another gentleman, Mr. Smith, who subsequently I ran into again at Central years later, became later on. My first black teacher of note was high school, and it was a gentleman who taught me math. First black male teacher. I think I had a couple of females during the course of my time in junior high. But I had no black teachers in elementary school.

Q: What would you consider to be the five most important events or developments that have occurred in Newark during your residence here? For example, strikes, elections, the riots, fire or natural disasters, or black immigration.

Crawford: During my time, which is from the early 50s on, some of the most significant events for me was 67 rebellion. I think that's the first time we saw the anger level of Newark show up at the level it did. Prior to the election of Ken Gibson, the run-off election that Ken Gibson had to win. Because remember we had to vote out a convicted felon to get the first black mayor. That has always stayed with me that we literally had to have a run-off election between a black man and a convicted felon. Cause Hugh Adenizio was going to jail. We knew that already. And yet still

we had to have an run-off election to keep a convicted felon from being mayor of our town. But, nevertheless, we did do that. Other significant events.

Q: What about fires or natural disasters such as snow storms or hurricanes or tornadoes? You ever.

Crawford: Okay. I remember a very bad fire happened over on Avon Avenue just below the Avon Avenue School there. It took out the church and, matter of fact, that whole area in there they since started rebuilding with townhouses. But it wiped out, oh, a block and a half, two blocks. About two blocks worth of housing over there. That was, and it took out the church, took the church too. I forget the name of that church.

Q: What about the snow storms or labor strikes? Do you remember any other natural disasters.

Crawford: I remember there were, there'd been two snow storms of truly significant proportion. There was one and I can't remember the year now, but literally brought Newark to a standstill. And obviously last January's snow storm are the two most significant for me. I can't remember the year of the previous one. And there was a hurricane that the effects of it closed the schools up early. I was in elementary school. I was a patrol boy. You know, we had the little Buster Brown. Well, we used to be monitors on the corner too. So we used to have to go out first. We'd be out before school started. We'd go, we'd be allowed out of class early at the end of school so that we could get to our post before school ended. And here we've got this hurricane coming through, and, you know, we're supposed to go out to our post. It was like, what, that's when you start realizing, that's one of the first times the sense of responsibility of policemen, firemen and all kind of hit cause we're responsible for seeing that all the kids get home. Meanwhile, we're going to be staying here while this hurricane's coming. So, you know, it started striking. I remember that. And that got to be, oh, 59, 60, 61, somewhere in that time frame.

Q: Two kind of follow-up questions here. What effect do you think that black immigration has

had on Newark? Socially or economically, educationally, and all aspects.

Crawford: Immigration. Okay, now, I would say that it brought a lot of folks into the City that were just. Well, now we've had that black immigration that I guess tailed out by the latter part of the 60s. We've now had the Haitian, you know, we've now had the Haitian African-American, Dominicans and all the others now coming in. And I guess that, you know, the Afro-American migration I think has tended to probably peter out at this point. And what I guess we see in Newark is that economically as we've been able to, we've kind of gone from the center of Newark and start moving out to the fringe more of Newark. So that you go to the Wickwake section now and, you know, a host of our politicians live in the Wickwake section when as a kid, that's where the Jews lived. I guess we've changed in that we, as economically allowable, moved on. We kind of moved through Newark.

Q: What do you think might have had the greater impact on white flight? Black immigration or the rebellion, you choose to what we call the riot as the rebellion. And I want you to tell me why.

Crawford: I think more so the rebellion scared them than just black folks coming into Newark. Cause within their communities I think they were pretty secure within their community. We were only moving in. Those who could move in obviously could afford to move in. I think the thing that really triggered them to leave, cause in some cases they took financial, they took economic hits to get out of town as quick as some of them did. Because they didn't get the kind of prices for their homes that they could have gotten. So their need to get away from us I think was spurred on more by seeing the level of rage that black folks showed them during the time of the riots. And, in fact, it was only what they saw cause it didn't happen around them. The rebellion itself barely touched where I lived, and I lived on West Ryan and Seymour which was, which had to be ten blocks from Springfield Avenue to my house at the closest point. Clinton Avenue suffered some effects. I mean some stores and shops along Clinton Avenue were looted. Bergen Street past Clinton Avenue was not touched. Nothing from Hawthorne Avenue beyond was touched. So, in fact, the white folks did not experience any of the rebellion cause nobody in their area did

anything. So it was merely a perception of what went on that scared them away as opposed to, oh my God, they're in my neighborhood. Never happened that way. So I think it was more the fact that the news showed them something that they did not know, that they hadn't seen it that did it to them than anything else.

Q: Now tell me why you prefer to refer to the riots, and some people refer to it as a riot, and you're about the second person to whom I've spoken and they talk about it as a rebellion.

Crawford: Well, coming out of my militancy days. And I also have a friend who knew a fellow at CBS, who, he told me, that they had occasion to look over tapes of what went on in Newark, what went on Watts, what went on in Detroit, and those other few places where there were, quote, you know, riots or rebellions as I choose to call it. And it's interesting, and now with the Freedom of Information Act, we now find out that J. Edgar Hoover and several other of the alphabet agencies out there planted folks within a lot of our communities and a lot of different protest groups at that time, the Panthers, on the west coast United Slaves known as US, and, you know, different other organizations who fermented a lot of what went on. To this day, I've had a problem with you telling me that the rumor went around that Johnson's cab driver was beat up and possibly killed by the police and that was supposed to be the flash point for folks coming out of the Hayes Home Project and rioting on the police station. To this day, I have problems with a spontaneous action of that nature happening, and of all places they rioted on the police station. I don't know. To this day I just have a problem with that not having been an orchestrated thing. I choose to say rebellion as opposed to riot because I want to dictate the terms under which that's defined. And I don't want to use their definition of that as a riot as much as I want to use rebellion.

Q: I see. Okay. Did you play any part of any of those things that you talked about? I asked you a question about five important or significant events or developments in Newark. Did you play any personal role in any of the things that you talked about?

Crawford: No. Spectator at best. Observer of some.



Q: In what major ways has Newark changed since you first arrived here and how do you view the changes that have occurred? Think about that one carefully now because we're talking about the time when you were two years old. So that means from your earliest perception of what Newark was and what it is now. What kind of changes do you see?

Crawford: The family of Newark is less the family it was. And I mean that in the sense that, when I was growing up in Newark in 52, 55, 59, 60, up through, say even as late as say, let's say 67, the family of Newark, white, black, whatever, I think we were much more of a family people. All of us Newarkers. I think now we in Newark are much more disassociated with each other. Black to black, as much as black to the East Ward Portuguese or Italian, or the North Ward Italian. I think we are, or Puerto Ricans. I think we are less the family of Newark than residents of Newark. I think we were more of a family in Newark back through my childhood.

Q: What about economic and social changes and the education like we talked about. Do you see that politics has had too great, or do you think it has had any impact on education? On the quality of education in Newark.

Crawford: I think it's had a negative impact. I think that in reality our politicians have not chosen to deal with education other than as a campaign issue at campaign time. But as an ongoing thing, I don't think our politicians care one or another about education in Newark. Other than what it may do as far as helping family members with jobs and things like that. I don't think they really paid any attention to education in Newark.

Q: Well, what kind of changes do you see at the socio-economic level for black folk at Newark?

Crawford: The haves and have nots have become a distinct. The gap or the chasm between the haves and have nots has grown. The ability to not be the have not has gotten harder on more black folks by that whole lack of education. I think the ability to get from one side of that chasm to the other has gotten even harder on a lot of folks. That if you have not been in the process of

getting a good education, that it's extremely difficult to pull yourself up by those boot straps that the Conservatives so rapidly want to tell everybody is the way to do it in America. Yeah, but you better get a good education to understand where those boot straps lead to. And if you don't get that good education, pulling those boot straps don't mean a whole lot.

Q: What traditions or celebrations or events in Newark that you witnessed in the past no longer exist?

Crawford: Okay. A couple of them. Halloween in the Clinton Hills area was treated so much different then it is now. We used to have a parade up and down Clinton Avenue that went from Clinton Place Junior High, out of their playground, all the way down Clinton Avenue to Bergen Street School. And it was one of the really fun events. I mean, the store owners all up and down Clinton Avenue. You'd start out, you'd go through your neighborhood and get candy from all the people. I mean, we used to have to use shopping bags to do this. And then you go up and down Clinton Avenue, and shop owners, you know, and it was a nice night. And you'd just parade down Clinton Avenue. That's not done. Don't know that you can do it with as crazy as the kids are today. The major streets were decorated. I mean much more. Major streets downtown. I mean the festive spirit was truly seen. Not done. The lack of parades. The parades in Newark City have just died away to the point where there's no parades. And on a subject that's not quite the same, but we don't have city leagues for sports anymore. Where Wickwake, Central, Southside, Westside played each other. And that sense of community of the schools. Now this one's in some league over here, that one's going over here, and there's not sense of the kids in Newark having an identity of playing sports for or in Newark anymore. You know, so that's gone.

Q: And how do you feel about those changes?

Crawford: Sad. I'm saddened by the fact that it's happened. I'm somewhat frustrated in that our politicians don't, for whatever reason, see it or acknowledge the fact that these are things that we've lost in this town.

Q: When do you feel black life in Newark reached it's highest peak and what was so great about that particular time?

Crawford: Believe it or not, it may have actually happened at some of my youngest years. That by the time of the 60s it may have peaked already. In that we, yes, we've had black politicians and all that now. I think that black folks probably really had hit their peak in Newark in terms of economics and the ability to move socio-economically to a different level. I think we probably hit it by the 50s.

Q: Okay. When you feel black life in Newark reached its lowest point and what was so bad about that particular time?

Crawford: Sometimes I think every day may be a new, a new mark on it. You know, you listen to the news and they're finding we have seven kids in an apartment, and, you know, mother and boyfriend are beating them. Waiting to hear new stories every day that are even crazier than that story was yesterday. I like to believe that we've reached our low, but I just don't know. I think we pumped so many kids through the school system that are functional illiterates, that have no realistic change of finding a decent job out here until some remedial work is done with their skills, that, you know. You know, every year my wife and I worry that is this the summer that all hell breaks loose. Is this the summer when the temperature just reaches that point where just all hell just breaks loose.

Q: Okay. Now, what about Miss Louise Scott. Did you know Louise Scott?

Crawford: No. I've read some stuff about her. Did not know her.

Q: How would you sum up your experience of living in Newark, and if you had your life to live over would you live in Newark? And give me reasons for your answer.

Crawford: Okay. Since living here in Newark was not an option for me. Since I came here as a child, brought to Newark. My childhood was a pretty decent one. You know, I have no scarred memories of growing up in Newark. The school system was not a bad one for me. You know, I enjoyed Bergen, I enjoyed Clinton Place, I enjoyed Arts High. Did not have a problem on that level. So I can't qualify that answer by saying that I would have gone anyplace else cause it was never in my option. I never had a say in coming to Newark or not coming to Newark. So I can only go with that, and since I can't place it in any other context, you know, knowing what I know now or have known for the last, say twenty-five years, would still not make it possible for me to change the situation of how I got to Newark in the first place. So, for me, Newark I am saddened by where Newark is at because I remember it differently. And I might remember it from a child's eyes, but I still, I'm at least seventeen by 67, so I've had, so there's some maturing on while I'm looking at Newark still. So not all the time, not all of my memories of Newark are just that of a child. So, the town I grew up in is not the place that I now live. I wish better for Newark. I don't wish that I'm one to do what I can to make Newark better. But it's definitely not the town that I grew up in .

Q: That's the end of our interview, Mr. Crawford. And I thank you so very much again for coming and being a part of the effort to establish our Oral History Project for the Scott-Krueger Mansion African-American Cultural Center. It's been a pleasure for me and also an enlightenment. Thanks again.

END OF INTERVIEW